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PROCEEDINGS.

TENTH MEETING, June 2d, 1859. In the absence of the President, the Rev. Joseph P. Thompson, D. D., 3rd Vice President, took the chair.

On motion, the ordinary business of the Society, except the admission of new members, was suspended.

Herman Andersen, Samuel Dexter Bradford, Jr., Julius Bing, Malcolm Campbell, Robert J. Dodge, John S. Dunning, Daniel W. Fiske, James Lorimer Graham, Jr., Andrew F. Higgins, Henry B. Millard, William C. Miller, —— Nugent, Bartholomew O'Connor, Edward P. Rudd, James M. Sanderson, Charles Tracy, J. Howard Wainwright, and Alexander R. Walsh, were elected Resident Members.

Thomas Hoyne, of Chicago, Ill., and Thaddeus Stevens, of Lancaster, Pa., were elected Non-Resident Members.

The Chair then stated that the particular object of the meeting was to enable the Society to pay a tribute of respect to their lately deceased Honorary Member, Alexander von Humboldt.*

Prof. Francis Lieber, L. L. D., then read a paper on "The Life and Character of Humboldt."

Resolutions, expressive of the Society's regret at their great loss, were introduced by the Honorable Charles P. Daly, and, having been seconded by Professor Alexander Dallas Bache, L. L. D., in an eloquent and feeling address, unanimously carried.

Remarks were also made by Professor Arnold Guyot, and the Hon. George Bancroft.

Adjourned.

* A full report of the proceedings of this meeting, with the several addresses, etc., will be issued in a separate form.

DEPARTMENT OF GEOGRAPHY.

NOTES ON SIAM.*

BY DAVID OLYPHANT KING, ESQ., OF NEWPORT, R.I.

Accompanying a Map of His Travels.

Having been the first to avail of the recent opening of the Kingdom of Siam, circumstances obliged me to be often absent from the capital city, and I beg to hand you herewith a copy of the map of my travels in that country and the adjacent Kingdom of Cambodia, sufficiently interesting, I trust, to warrant its reception at your hands.

With the exception of M. de Pallegoix's account of these countries, nothing has hitherto been published respecting them worthy of any confidence; and of the interior, beyond the city of Bangkok, the fanciful accounts of the natives served merely to excite a curiosity that

* A letter dated Newport, R. I., Feb. 5, 1859, read before the "American Geographical and Statistical Society" on Thursday, 24th March, 1859, by John Jay, Esq., Foreign Corresponding Secretary. (*See Proceedings, p.* 65.)

a foreigner was unable to gratify. Permitted at last to investigate for ourselves, I became acquainted with Eastern Siam, and what is left of the old Kingdom of Cambodia; and although the many reported marvels in botany and natural history were successively followed up until they were proved fables, still the geographical features of a new country are always of interest, and a few general remarks respecting them may not be unacceptable.

The eastern shore of the Gulf of Siam stretches from Bangkok to Chantiboon, and beyond Kampoot, but the lofty range of mountains along the coast impedes communication, and the Petrio canal is exclusively used by travelers to or from the eastern provinces. This canal, fifty-five miles long, connects the city of Bangkok with the Bang Pa Kong river, and is made through a flat alluvial country, entirely devoted to the culture of rice. The natives, like the rest of the Siamese, appear to be a branch of the Malay family. The floors of their bamboo thatched houses are raised some four feet from the ground, their clothing simply a cloth round the waist, and whatever they may be engaged in, one hand is generally actively employed warring against the swarms of mosquitos.

The canal joins the Bang Pa Kong River twenty miles from the mouth of the latter. This river, as you ascend, becomes narrow and winding; cultivation is restricted to a strip of land on either bank at first, and then occurs only at intervals; the inhabitants are few and poor, and nothing that can be called a village is met with until you arrive at Pachim. Here, and elsewhere in Siam, the traveller is struck by the immense tracts of land laying idle for the want of a laboring population. Emigration from China would soon remedy the evil, but the Siamese rulers dread the introduction of any number of coolies, and restrict their importation.

Pachim is the residenc of the governor of a province, and the traveler must land and show his passport. The officials are invariably civil and obliging, provided your passport comes from their superior in rank; and custom among themselves obliges the foreigner to offer a small present before leaving. The town of Pachim consists of some twenty bamboo houses, and was entirely destroyed two years since—a fire from the prairie consuming crops and all. The river here is about forty yards wide, and during the rainy season, from July until November, runs out at the rate of five miles per hour: during the rest of the year there is a regular rise and fall of the tide here, and its influence is felt up to Kabin. Leaving Pachim, the navigation of the river is tedious, being against a strong current in the wet season; after which the river rapidly falls, and the channel is narrow and full of obstructions. An occasional glimpse of the mountains far off to the east and north is obtained, but the country along the river maintains its level character, and generally is densely wooded.

Twenty years ago, during a war with the Cochin-Chinese, a military road was constructed from the town of Wooang Kabin, at the head of navigation, across to the Tasawai River; and although the bridges have disappeared and the road is a mere wreck, still it is the only route across the country. Merchandise is conveyed in small, but neat, covered carts, drawn by a pair of buffaloes—travelers using elephants; and from this point over to the confines of Cochin-China, these latter animals occupy the place the horse does with us. They are large, docile, and well trained, and cheaper than anywhere else in the world—a full-grown animal being worth from $50 to $75. About two-thirds of the males are provided with tusks, and in buying and selling the natives appear to think nothing of the value of the ivory. Ten miles south-east from Kabin, I visited a spot on the bank of the river, where a number of natives were sinking shafts, in search of gold. From all I could learn, but little had ever been found, and of late scarcely any.

Elephant traveling over the military road is tedious and uninteresting. During the rainy season the streams are so swollen that the road is never traversed if it can be avoided, and the

want of water in the dry season is an ever present evil; the elephants soon become foot-sore and sick, if pushed beyond twenty-five miles per day; travelers are rarely met with, and solitary houses, twenty miles apart, only relieve the weariness of the route. One day out from Kabin the road winds around the base of a mountain, but with this exception, it is all a prairie across to Tasawai, occasionally broken and rolling, and then stretching for miles as smooth as a floor. The soil is of red sand, and the trees twisted and dwarfed in a manner I could never account for, until, caught upon one occasion by the fire that annually sweeps over these plains among them, I had an opportunity of seeing how the young trees were parched and shriveled by it. Bog iron, which occurs frequently, is the only metal to be found on the road.

The provincial town of Mattabong is situated on both sides of a river of that name, in the center of an immense plain. The country, for nearly a hundred miles around it, is flooded with water soon after the commencement of the rains, traveling becomes impossible except in boats, and wild animals wander off to the mountains. The existence of a large lake to the eastward has been reported to foreigners ever since their residence in Siam, and in the map accompanying M. de Pallegoix's work, it is incorrectly inserted. The native accounts of its size were found to be not far from the truth, and I passed completely round it, the shores everywhere being pleasantly diversified with forest and open prairie. The natives hold the lake in a sort of superstitious fear, its rough waves causing many accidents to their small canoes; and squalls and water-spouts are of frequent occurrence. During the months of January, February and March, when the water has drained off the surrounding country, the lake appears alive with fish, and the inhabitants collect large quantities of them. From September to December, the banks are overflowed from ten to twenty feet deep; in the lake, no bottom at ten fathoms; at the close of the dry season, in May, frequent shoals occur in its bed, and a boat drawing two feet of water is all its shallowness will allow.

At the northern extremity of the lake, in the vicinity of Simrap, was situated the ancient capital of Cambodia, no trace of which now remains except in the Nokon Temple, spared from destruction on account of its religious character, when the city was taken by the Cochin-Chinese, about A. D. 200. The temple stands alone in the jungle, in too perfect order to be called a ruin—a relic of a race far ahead of the present in all the arts and sciences. A magnificent stone causeway, a third of a mile long, leads through an ornamental entrance up to the temple, composed of three quadrangles, one within, and raised above the other. The lower quadrangle is 200 yards square, a broad verandah, with a double row of square ornamented pillars running all round, with large and elaborately ornamented entrances at the corners and centers. It is built of hard grey sandstone, without wood, cement or iron in its composition, the blocks of stone fitting to each other with wonderful precision, and the whole temple, within and without, covered with carefully executed bas-reliefs of Budhist idols. A few priests reside outside its walls, and the place is visited as a shrine by the Cambodians. On the eastern verandah, a square tablet of black marble has been set into the wall, covered with writing, and doubtless setting forth the main facts in the raising of the temple. The characters used are precisely similar to the present Cambodian alphabet, but so much has the use of the letters changed, that the present race cannot decipher it.

The Oodoong River issues from the the south end of Smith's Lake, and is throughout a broad, majestic stream. The town of Poontenang supplies the whole country with pottery, and from there to Oodoong scarcely a sign of human life is to be found. This city (Oodoong) is the present capital of Cambodia—the former city having been completely destroyed by the Cochin-Chinese, fifteen years ago. A wooden palisade, twenty feet high and 600 yards square, encloses a straggling collection of

thatched houses, the residences of the nobles, in the centre of which a low brick wall encloses the palace, mint and arsenal. Everything bespeaks poverty, and the recent ravages of war; but nothing could exceed the friendliness of the welcome extended to us by the King, and we were assured that foreign travelers would be willingly granted every facility.

On the river below Oodoong, the Roman Catholics have a mission establishment, at Pena Loo, where we found a bishop and one priest, and descending the river, stopped at Pelompeng, a town on the borders of Cochin-China. This is a place of some little trade—raw silk, iron, dried fish, &c., being brought here from the Cambodia River—but the crowds of Cochin-Chinese in the streets manifest anything but kind feelings. From a hill in the rear of the town, the further course of the rivers, as shown in my map, was noted; the Cambodia River, after receiving the Oodoong River, turning due east, with a breadth not less than two miles.

The elephant road from Oodong to Mattabong, like the rest of the roads, is only available during the dry season, and as far as Potisat, winds through a hilly region. Near this town a large deposit of antimony is found, and also quarries of Oriental alabaster. The journey from Mattabong to the coast at Chantiboon usually occupies six days, the crossing of the coast range of mountains causing some delay, and affording nothing in scenery in return.

The botany and natural history of this region, so far as I can judge, afford nothing new or strange. The annual overflow of the plains is favorable to nothing except aquatic plants, and the water lily is common everywhere. In addition to white and purple lilies, and the common lotus, a bright cherry colored variety is found at Simrap. At Penit Pza, a lily was said to exist, surpassing in size and beauty the Victoria Regia. It was not in flower at the time of my visit, and the leaf of the plant was similar to the lotus. The cork tree, wild nutmeg, licorice, and several varieties of india rubber and gutta-percha, are met with in the mountains, but not in sufficient quantities to be of commercial value. My endeavors to meet with the tree producing the gamboge gum were unsuccessful, it only being found in the mountainous region between Chantiboon and Kampoot.

The wild animals of the country are not as numerous as might be supposed. The natives say that twenty years ago an epidemic swept off immense numbers of them; and though tracks of deer, buffalo, wild cattle and pigs, are often seen, the animals are few and wild, and seldom met with. Wild elephants and rhinoceri are found in remote districts, and the tiger and leopard are heard of occasionally everywhere. The natives hold these last in in but little fear, saying they have never been known to attack any one that faced them. This country has long enjoyed a reputation for abounding in reptiles that does not belong to it. The skins of anacondas offered at Bangkok come from the northern provinces, and in all my travels I never saw but four snakes, all small. The annoyances of travel are caused by smaller specimens of animal life. Ticks are common, and require constant care; mosquitos are often very troublesome; and swarms of large horse-flies, that bring blood through an elephant's skin, sometimes drive men and animals almost wild; but the greatest nuisance are the ground leeches. The first shower of the rainy season brings into life a crop of leeches, that grow to some three inches long, and infest the face of the earth. Warned, by the rustle of the leaves or the jar of the ground, of the approach of something living, they erect themselves on one extremity in the pathway, and swing round and round, trying to cling to what is passing by. Halt in the path, and you can see them coming in hurried spans from all sides; drive your pantaloons inside your boots, and they climb up and get down your neck. To sleep in the open air is impossible, as they rest not at night, and animals of all sorts are covered with them.

The birds of the country are mostly of the wading species. Pelicans and ducks are common, but the adjutants and birds of the crane

family are innumerable; eagles and vultures are commonly found in the vicinity of carrion, and the shoe-horn bird of Sumatra is occasionally met with in the forest.

So far as my experience goes, this land is poor in minerals. A little gold is obtained, but iron is the only thing found in any quantity; no trace of coal anywhere. The mountainous region along the coast is doubtless richer, but is at present unknown.

With these remarks, I commend the accompanying map to your attention.

REMARKS OF THE HON. CHARLES P. DALY.

Judge Daly said that the acknowledgments of the Society were due to Mr. King for the interesting paper he had forwarded. Traveling through a country as yet but imperfectly known, he had been careful to observe those things which travelers generally neglect, and as careful to omit what they usually thought it important to relate. He has carefully observed the natural features of the country over which he passed—the soil, its capacity for cultivation; the means of irrigation, and the industrial state and condition of the inhabitants; the winding and course of the roads; the width, direction and strength of the current of rivers; the probable limit and nature of the mineral deposits; the flora, and fauna, correcting our impressions both as to the numbers and variety of the former, and removing the prevalent impression that the country east of the Menam abounded in reptiles. This indeed is what such a communication should be—a contribution to our knowledge of geography.

In respect to the temple described by Mr. King, it is to be inferred from its locality and structure that it belonged to a later period than that which produced those stupendous works, the excavated rock-temples, grottos and pagodas, which are found at Elephanta and Salsette in Bombay, at Ellora and Deoghur, along the Coromandel coast from its northern to its southern extremity, and in the island of Ceylon. In some respects the temple resembles the great pagoda at Seringham, situated near the southern extremity of the Indian peninsula, and that on the island of Ramisseram, between the peninsula and Ceylon—the former of which is a seven-fold inclosure, or court-within-court, rising like this temple pyramidally; and the latter has similar to this, a grand entrance leading up to the principal temple. As the worship of Brahma is said to have been brought from Ceylon to the Malayan peninsula and the adjacent islands, the religious architecture connected with that worship would naturally follow; but it is observable that in that great group of architectural remains, the chief seat of which is the island of Java, and to which this temple from its proximity must be regarded as belonging, a far greater perfection in art is exhibited than in Ceylon or in the Indian peninsula, especially in the use of the arch. It is here that those quadrangular enclosures, rising one above the other as in the temple seen by Mr. King, constitute the prevailing style. The temple of Boro Budor, in Java, has six of these enclosures, and that of Brambanan, in the center of the island, consists of five parallelograms one within the other, embracing on the whole nearly three hundred temples or chapels. In the island of Madura near Java, there is one of those pyramidal pagodas, surrounded by ornamental pillars like the temple in Cambodia. All the chief features of this temple, as described by Mr. King—its series of quadrangular enclosures, rows of ornamented pillars and verandahs, its blocks of stone fitting so exactly, its highly ornamented entrance, its walls covered with figures carefully executed in bas-relief; its inscribed tablet set in the walls—denote that it belongs to that period of advanced civilization and development of which we know so little, but the evidence of which appears in the extraordinary architectural remains existing, especially in Java. A comparison of the description and drawing of the temple to be found in Sir Stamford Raffles work on Java, and that of other writers on the Indian Archipelago, would seem to warrant this conclusion. It might be expected that a temple found in this locality would possess the

general features of those in the neighboring kingdom of Burmah, which date from about the eleventh century; but the Burmese architecture—judging from the drawings and description of Mr. Yule in his recent work on Ava, especially of the extensive mines which he found at Pagan—is different, abounding largely in the use of the arch, and, very strangely in that quarter of the world, combining much of the Saracenic with the general ground plan of the cruciform gothic. It was to be regretted that Mr. King had not copied the inscribed tablet he saw set in the wall of the temple. Similar inscriptions from Java had been preserved by Raffles, and would be found carefully engraved in his work. The attention of scholars was now actively turned to the languages of the Indian Archipelago, and every inscription of a character like this would be useful. Mr. King, on the authority of the present ruler of Cambodia, considers this temple as dating back to the second century. This is a period much earlier than has generally been assigned to the large and elaborate religious structures of the Indian Archipelago. The period of their erection is usually fixed between the sixth and ninth centuries; but our knowledge upon the subject is very imperfect, and archeologists are scarcely in a position to dispute the point with his majesty, the King of Cambodia.

Judge Daly then referred to the importance of the recent relations established between the United States and Siam, and what might be expected to grow out of it. The public interest had been chiefly attracted by the opening of Japan through the efforts of our government, and great anticipations had been formed of the important consequences that would result from it. It might be doubted, however, at least in a commercial point of view, if more solid advangtaes would not accrue to the Union from the change in the restrictive policy that had hitherto closed Siam against all intercouse with the maritime nations of the world, than would result from the expedition to Japan. The opening of Japan had exhibited a state of things very different from what might have been expected from the course pursued by that remarkable people, in having no communication with Europe or America, except through the channel of one nation, and that of the most limited and restricted kind. We had found them in a high state of material prosperity, polite, industrious, temperate, exceedingly intelligent, and exhibiting all the marks of an orderly and well governed people. If they had not reached the perfection in the arts, sciences, and general knowledge to which the western nations have attained, they did not at least present those extremes of social condition—the poverty, misery, pauperism, and vices inseparably linked with, and which stand in such fearful contrast with our highest form of modern civilization. Our consul, Mr. Harris, had declared in a recent communication that in no country in the world was there so little poverty; none where the mass of the people enjoyed more solid and substantial comforts with less of harrassing and debilitating labor; and the picture of national prosperity and happiness was so striking as to draw from him a very fervent hope that his coming among them might not be referred to hereafter as marking the period when a change for the worse took place in their national condition. It was a grave question whether a people so situated would be benefited or injured by closer contact with the maritime nations of the world, and whether the production of the country would be more than adequate for the wants of a population so numerous, and who would have but little to offer in exchange. Commerce, it was true, created artificial wants, but it was to be remembered that the Japanese were not an indolent people in possession of a fruitful country, who might be stimulated by commerce to greater exertion, but a very numerous, thriving and industrious people, generally estimated at over fifty millions, who had hitherto consumed nearly all which they produced. In the commerce they had maintained with the Chinese and Dutch, they had little to offer except camphor, copper ingots, silk fabrics, lacquered ware, and porcelain, in exchange for

dyes, spices, sugars, sperm oil, cotton and linen cloths, and a few of the metals; and even this trade was very limited.

Siam presented a marked contrast to this condition. It was a tropical country, abounding in nearly all the valuable productions of the east, and, with an industrious population, could furnish vast quantities for export. It was especially rich in spices, gums, in the costly woods and other articles so highly valued in commerce; and for the great staples which support a population, such as rice, it was one of the most productive countries in the world. But whilst thus highly favored by nature, it was inhabited by a people who, though temperate, reverential, and even gentle, were, by the common agreement of all travelers, crafty, mean, ignorant, lying, conceited, slavishly servile, and universally indolent. Though much larger than the three islands of Japan proper, and with a soil capable of yielding much more abundantly, its population was not more than one-tenth of that of Japan. Here was a field for civilization and its fruits. Three American missionaries have been established for some years at the capital, Bangkok; and though their mission has not been crowned with much success—for it was believed that they had not made one Siamese convert to Christianity—still these gentlemen had done a great deal for mankind by enlightening and enlarging the views of the present ruler of Siam, his prime minister, and several influential members of the government; and it was undoubtedly to their labors chiefly that we are indebted for the change in the restrictive policy of the government, and the success of the mission of Sir John Bowring and our commissioner, Mr. Harris. The King of Siam had acquired a knowledge of the English language, and for an Asiatic monarch he spoke and wrote it with tolerable proficiency. His brother had given much attention to the study of medicine, and had recently been elected a member of the Medical Society of this city—an honor he valued very highly. The government had evinced great interest in this country, and it was for us to keep up and strengthen that feeling. The present was but the beginning of a commercial intercourse that might be greatly enlarged hereafter, especially with the extension and development of our own empire on the Pacific. It was well, therefore, that the attention of our people should be drawn to this important country; that our merchants, especially, should turn their eyes in that direction, and ascertain what advantages Siam offers for more extended commercial relations. Our merchants would no doubt follow up the pathway that had been opened by our missionaries, and through the stimulating influence of commerce, this rich and fruitful country would be brought to contribute to the productive industry and advancing civilization of the globe.

BRITISH COLUMBIA.

Governor Douglas has issued a proclamation, declaring that a new town, to be the capital of British Columbia, would be laid off on the northern bank of Fraser River. The plans were to be published in March, and one-fourth of the lots reserved for purchasers from the United Kingdom and Canada; the other three-fourths would be sold by auction in April, to the highest bidder. The purchasers of town-lots in Langley who had paid in full, would be permitted to surrender them, and have the purchase-money applied in payment of lots at the new capital.

The proposed capital will be declared to be a port of entry, and vessels will be enabled to proceed direct to Fraser River without, as heretofore, touching at Victoria, or may touch at Victoria at their option.

The new town is to be called Queensborough, and will be at the mouth of Pitt River, five miles from the mouth of Fraser, and fourteen miles below Langley.

In the same proclamation, announcing his intention to found a new capital, Governor Douglas has issued some regulations about the lands and mines of the Colony. He declares that all the lands and mines belong to the Crown in fee; that the lowest price of the